

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet including Figures 5A and 5B includes changes to Figures 5A and 5B. This sheet, which includes Figures 5A and 5B, replaces the original sheet including Figures 5A and 5B. This drawing amendment changes the reference number 4 to reference number 6, indicating a coupling agent (specification, e.g., page 24, line 12 to page 25, line 16).

The attached drawing sheet including Figures 3 and 4 includes a change to Figure 3. This sheet, which includes Figures 3 and 4, replaces the original sheet including Figures 3 and 4. This drawing amendment deletes the reference number 4 in Figure 3.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The amendments set out above and the following remarks are believed responsive to the points raised by the Office Action dated March 7, 2007. In view of the amendments set out above and the following remarks, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Pending Claims

Claims 3 and 11-16 have been cancelled, and claims 17-18 are added, so that claims 1-2, 4-10, and 17-18 are currently pending.

Claims 1, 2, and 4 have been amended, and claims 17-18 have been added, to describe the invention more clearly. No new matter has been added, and the basis for the amended claim language may be found within the original specification, claims, and drawings.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 3, which has been cancelled. Claim 2 is supported at, for example, page 19, lines 2-6. New claims 17-18 are supported by, for example, Example 6 and original claims 5-8. Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants are pleased to note that the Office Action indicates claims 3, 4, 6, and 8 to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 3. Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form.

Specification Objections

The specification was objected to on the grounds that the examples include sizes given in terms of ".m". These informalities were corrected in the Supplemental Preliminary Amendment filed June 16, 2004. Because these informalities have already been corrected, the objection to the specification on this ground should be withdrawn.

The specification was also objected to on the grounds that the wording with respect to the comparative examples on pages 10 and 16 implies that the magnet powder was coated with both the coupling agent and the resin powder. The Office Action questions whether this is correct.

This objection to the specification is not understood. As far as the Applicants are aware, the statements with respect to Comparative Examples 1 and 3 questioned by the Office Action are correct as stated in the specification.

The specification amendment of June 16, 2004 was objected to on the grounds that it introduced new matter into the specification. The specification has been amended to restore the original language, therefore obviating the objection to the specification on this ground.

It is respectfully submitted that with these remarks and amendments to the specification, the objections to the specification have been obviated and should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 9-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite on the grounds that claims 9, 11, 13, and 15 are duplicates of claims 10, 12, 14, and 16, respectively.

Claims 11-16 have been cancelled, thus obviating the rejection of those claims.

Claim 9 includes the limitations of independent claim 1, which requires a coupling agent. Claim 10 includes the limitations of claim 2, which does not require a coupling agent. Thus, the plastic magnet formed by injection molding of the plastic magnet precursor according to claim 9 will have a different composition from the plastic magnet formed by injection molding of the plastic magnet precursor according to claim 10. Accordingly, claim 9 is not a duplicate of claim 10.

Thus, it is submitted that with these remarks and amendments to the claims, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 have now been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by JP 04-11702 (hereinafter, "JP '702").

Claim 2 was rejected under § 102 as anticipated by JP 61-93603 (hereinafter, "JP '603").

Claims 9-10 were rejected under § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,211,896 to Ward et al. (hereinafter, "the '896 patent").

Claims 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over the '896 patent or U.S. Patent No 5,429,899 to Chiba et al. (hereinafter, "the '899 patent") in view of

U.S. Patent No. 5,888,416 to Ikuma et al. (hereinafter, "the '416 patent") and WO 02/3302 to Kawano et al.¹

Claims 5 and 7 were rejected under § 103 as unpatentable over JP '702 in view of the '416 patent and WO 02/3302.

Claims 9-12 were rejected under § 103 as unpatentable over the '899 patent.

Each of these rejections is separately and respectfully traversed. However, in order to expedite matters and to allow the application to pass to issuance quickly, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 3, thus obviating the rejections of independent claim 1 and dependent claims 5, 7, 9, 13, and 15, which include the limitations of amended claim 1.

Anticipation requires that the cited reference disclose each and every element of the claim. The anticipation rejection of claim 2 cannot be maintained because neither JP '603 nor any of the other cited references teaches each and every element of amended claim 2.

Amended claim 2 is directed to a magnet precursor including a resin powder that is melted at a surface that contacts the magnet powder to adhere the magnet powder around the resin powder. JP '603 does not teach a magnet precursor including a resin powder that is melted at a surface that contacts the magnet powder to adhere the magnet powder around the resin powder. In JP '603, the polymer is mechanically mixed with the magnetic powder at a temperature that is less than the glass transition point of the vinyl polymer to attach the magnetic powder to the surface of the vinyl polymer particles. Nowhere does JP '603 describe a plastic magnet precursor including a resin powder that is melted at a surface that contacts the magnet powder to adhere the magnet powder around the resin powder, as claimed in amended claim 2. Because none of the cited references teaches all of the elements of amended claim 2, the anticipation rejection cannot be maintained.

Because new dependent claims 17 and 18 depend from allowable claim 4, claims 17 and 18 are also allowable.

Since the independent claims are allowable for the reasons set forth above, the dependent claims are also allowable because they depend from allowable independent claims.

¹ References to "Kawano" herein refer to the English language cognate, U.S. Patent No. 6,893,580 (hereinafter, "the '580 patent").

Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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